

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1 and 18, as shown below, in which deleted terms are indicated with strikethrough and/or double brackets, and added terms are indicated with underscoring. Please cancel claims 19-20 without prejudice, and without abandonment of the subject matter thereof.

1. (previously presented) A particle measuring apparatus comprising:

 a flow cell having a first passage and a second passage extending continuously from the first passage;

 a particle monitoring area formed in the first passage by irradiating the flow cell with light; and

 a condenser which condenses light scattered by particles contained in sample fluid passing through the particle monitoring area so as to obtain information including diameter of the particles,

 wherein a central axis of the first passage substantially corresponds to an optical axis of the condenser, and

 a width of the second passage is greater than a width of the first passage so as not to impede the scattered light from entering an outmost peripheral portion of the condenser.

2. (previously presented) Thee particle measuring apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the second passage is substantially perpendicular to the first passage.

3. (previously presented) The particle measuring apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the second passage includes one of a pyramidal shape and a conical shape, and a central axis of the

second passage substantially corresponds to that of the first passage.

4. (previously presented) The particle measuring apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the flow cell further comprises:

second passages having one of a pyramidal shape and a conical shape provided on an upstream side and a downstream side of the flow cell, respectively; and

another condenser;

wherein

central axes of the second passages substantially correspond to that of the first passage, and said condensers are provided on opposite sides of the flow cell.

5. (previously presented) The particle measuring apparatus according to claim 2, wherein inner walls of the flow cell define an opening communicating said first and second passages, and said opening being sufficiently large so as not to impede the scattered light from entering the outmost peripheral portion of the condenser.

6. (previously presented) The particle measuring apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the condenser has a condensing angle which is substantially fully utilized for condensing the light scattered by the particles.

7. (previously presented) The particle measuring apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the condenser has a condensing angle which is substantially fully utilized for condensing the light scattered by the particles.

8. (Previously Presented) The particle measuring apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the condenser is a condensing lens.

9. (Previously Presented) The particle measuring apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the condensers are condensing lenses.

10. (Previously Presented) The particle measuring apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the first passage has a substantially rectangular cross sectional shape.

11. (Previously Presented) The particle measuring apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the second passage has a substantially rectangular cross sectional shape.

12. (previously presented) A particle measuring apparatus comprising:

 a flow cell having a first passage and a second passage extending continuously from the first passage;

 a particle monitoring area formed in the first passage by irradiating the flow cell with light; and

 a condenser which condenses light scattered by particles contained in sample fluid passing through the particle monitoring area so as to obtain information including diameter of the particles; wherein

 a central axis of the first passage substantially corresponds to an optical axis of the condenser; and

a width of the second passage is greater than a width of the first passage so as not to impede the scattered light from entering an outmost peripheral portion of the condenser at a position where the condenser is arranged relative to the flow cell.

13. (previously presented) The particle measuring apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the second passage which is substantially perpendicular to the first passage and extends continuously therefrom.

14. (previously presented) The particle measuring apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the second passage includes one of a pyramidal shape and a conical shape and extending continuously from the first passage, and a central axis of the second passage substantially corresponds to that of the first passage.

15. (previously presented) The particle measuring apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the flow cell further comprises:

second passages having a pyramidal shape or a conical shape provided on an upstream side and a downstream side of the flow cell, respectively, and which extend continuously from the first passage; and

another condenser; wherein

central axes of the sub passages substantially correspond to that of the first passage, and said condensers are provided on opposite sides of the flow cell.

16. (currently amended) A particle measuring apparatus comprising:

a flow cell having a first passage and second passages extending continuously from said first passage;

a particle monitoring area formed in the first passage by irradiating the flow cell with light; and

a plurality of condensers which condense light scattered by particles contained in sample fluid passing through the particle monitoring area so as to obtain information including diameter of the particles.

wherein

a central axis of the first passage substantially corresponds to an optical axis of the condensers and inner walls of the flow cell are arranged so as not to impede the scattered light from entering [[an]] outmost peripheral portions of the condensers;

said condensers are provided on opposite sides of the flow cell; and

a width of the second passage is greater than a width of the first passage so as not to impede the scattered light from entering [[an]] the outmost peripheral portions of the condensers.

17. (previously presented) The particle measuring apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the condensers are condensing lenses.

18. (currently amended) The particle measuring apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the flow cell further comprises a second passage are disposed substantially perpendicular to the first passage.